

Message Text

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67

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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R 231529Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8190

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 0336

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PDIP, DM

SUBJ: BENINESE FORMALLY FORBIDDEN FROM VISITING DIPLOMATIC
MISSIONS, CONSULATES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION
OFFICES

REF (A) 75 COTONOU 235, (B) COTONOU 331,

1. THE BENINESE GOVT HAS LONG DISCOURAGED CONTACT BETWEEN ITS
CITIZENS AND FOREIGN DIP REPS. THIS POLICY HAS NOW BEEN FORMAL-
IZED AND MADE EVEN MORE RESTRICTIVE. A COMMUNIQUE FROM THE MIN
OF INTERIOR, SECURITY AND NATIONAL ORIENTATION (LT AZONHIHO)
PUBLISHED IN THE GOVT-RUN NEWSPAPER EHUZU, FEB 23, 1976, STIP-
ULATES QUOTE WITH THE EXCEPTION OF BENINESE PERSONNEL REG-
ULARLY EMPLOYED IN EMBASSIES, CONSULATES AND DELEGATIONS, IT
IS FORMALLY PROHIBITED FOR ANY COMPATRIOT (I.E. BENINESE) TO
VISIT A FOREIGN DIP OR INTERNATIONAL MISSION (REPRESENTATION IN
FRENCH) LOCATED IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BENIN. IN CASE OF
NECESSITY AND ON WRITTEN REQUEST, AN AUTHORIZATION WILL BE
GRANTED BY THE MIN OF THE INTERIOR, SECURITY AND NATIONAL
ORIENTATION TO WHOMEVER EVINCES THE DESIRE. THE PERSON WILL
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THEN GO TO THE MIN OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND COOPERATION IN

ORDER TO COMPLET THERE THE PERTINENT FORMALITIES. ANY BENINESE
CAUGHT DISOBEYING THIS ORDER WILL BE CONSIDERED A COUNTER-
REVOLUTIONARY AND TREATED AS SUCH. END QUOTE

2. FRENCH AND WEST GERMAN AMBS AND US CHARGE HAVE CONSULTED
TOGETHER ABOUT THIS NEW REGULATION. WE SHARE A COMMON CONCERN
ABOUT THE EFFECTS THE REGULATIONS WILL HAVE ON NORMAL RUNNING
OF THE EMBASSIES, PARTICULARLY ABOUT POTENTIAL PROBLEMS OF
GETTING TECHNICAL SERVICE PERSONNEL, I.E., TELEPHONE OR TYPE-
WRITER REPAIRMEN, TO COME TO THE EMBASSIES WHEN NEEDED. FRENCH
AMB WHO IS DEAN OF THE DIP CORPS WAS RETICENT ABOUT MAKING
A DEMARCHE ON BEHLAF OF THE CORPS. IT WAS AGREED THAT EACH
EMBASSY WOULD SEND A DIP NOTE REQUESTING CLARIFICATION AND
EXEMPTION OF REPAIR PERSONNEL FROM THE REGULATIONS. (NOTE:
AS OUR EMBASSY IS FAIRLY SELF-SUFFICIENT FOR MAINTENACE SER-
VICES, WE WILL BE LESS AFFECTED THAN OTHER EMBASSIES.) CHIEFS
OF THREE WESTERN MISSIONS ARE CONSULTING WITH SPECIFIC COLLEA-
GUES FROM AFRICAN EMBASSIES, UNDP, AND EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT
FUND IN EFFORT TO HAVE THEM SEND SIMILAR NOTES TO FOREIGN MIN-
ISTRY, SO THAT IT IS NOT ONLY THE WESTERN POWERS WHO RAISE
OBJECTIONS. GHANAIA CHARGE HAS ALREADY AGREED TO DO SO.

3. THE THREE WESTERN EMBASSIES HAVE AGREED TO OPERATE ON THE
ASSUMPTION THAT THE NEW REGULATION APPLIES ONLY TO OUR CHANCER-
IES AND OT TO THE CULTURAL CENTERS, PEACE CORPS, OR SIMILAR
ORGANIZATIONS.

4. COMMENT; THE SANCTION FOR INFRACTIONS OF THE NEW RULE,
"TREATMENT AS A COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY", GIVES THE GPRB A
FREE HAND TO BE COMPLETELY ARBITRARY. WE PRESUME THAT THE
SEVERITY OF THE SANCTION WILL VARY WITH THE ECONOMIC STATUS
OF THE INDIVIDUAL OFFENDER. IT WILL PROVIDE THE GPRB WITH
ANOTHER EXCUSE FOR CONFISCATING PROPERTY AND PERHAPS JAILING
MEMBERS OF THE EDUCATED MIDDLE CLASS. IT IS CERTAIN THAT
OBTAINING PERMISSION TO VISIT ONE OF THE WESTERN EMBASSIES WILL
BE DIFFICULT, BUT CARTE BLANCE TREATMENT WILL PROBABLY BE
ACCORDED ANYONE WANTING TO VISIT A COMMUNIST EMBASSY. MOST
PERSONS WITH LEGITIMATE BUSINESS AT OUR EMBASSY ARE LIKELY TO
BE SO INTIMIDATED AS TO NOT EVEN APPLY FOR PERMISSION.

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4. THE EMBASSY FINDS THE TIMING OF THE ISSUANCE OF THIS NEW
REGULATION VERY SUSPICIOUS. IT COMES ONLY A FEW DAYS AFTER
THE CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE LANDLORD OF OUR CHANCERY COMPLEX,
GEN SOGLO, AND FORMIN ALLADAYE (COTONOU 331). THE GPRB MUST BE
AWARE THAT SOGLO HAS COME TO THE EMBASSY ALMOST DAILY TO
CONSULT WITH US OVER THE NOTICE FROM THE GPRB TO THE USG TO
VACATE THE CHANCERY COMPLEX. END COMMENT.

6. FYI: IN A RELATED DEVELOPMENT, EMBASSY LOCALS REPORT THAT BOTH THE FRENCH AND OUR EMBASSY HAVE COME UNDER INCREASED SURVEILLANCE BY BENINESE AUTHORITIES OVER THE PAST FEW DAYS. CHESHES

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